What is claimed is:

1. A compound 8 to 50 nucleobases in length targeted to a nucleic acid molecule encoding human stearoyl-CoA desaturase, wherein said compound specifically hybridizes with a nucleic acid molecule encoding human stearoyl-CoA desaturase and inhibits the expression of human stearoyl-CoA desaturase.

2. The compound of claim 1 which is an antisense oligonucleotide.

3. The compound of claim 2 wherein the antisense oligonucleotide has a sequence comprising SEQ ID NO: 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 23, 25, 26, 29, 30, 31, 33, 39, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, or 80.

4. The compound of claim 2 wherein the antisense oligonucleotide comprises at least one modified internucleoside linkage.

5. The compound of claim 4 wherein the modified internucleoside linkage is a phosphorothioate linkage.

6. The compound of claim 2 wherein the antisense oligonucleotide comprises at least one modified sugar moiety.

7. The compound of claim 6 wherein the modified sugar moiety is a 2'-O-methoxyethyl sugar moiety.

8. The compound of claim 2 wherein the antisense oligonucleotide comprises at least one modified nucleobase.

9. The compound of claim 8 wherein the modified nucleobase is a 5-methylcytosine.

10. The compound of claim 2 wherein the antisense oligonucleotide is a chimeric oligonucleotide.

11. A compound 8 to 50 nucleobases in length which specifically hybridizes with at least an 8-nucleobase portion of an active site on a nucleic acid molecule encoding human stearoyl-CoA desaturase.

12. A composition comprising the compound of claim 1 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or diluent.

13. The composition of claim 12 further comprising a colloidal dispersion system.

14. The composition of claim 12 wherein the compound is an antisense oligonucleotide.

15. A method of inhibiting the expression of human stearoyl-CoA desaturase in cells or tissues comprising contacting said cells or tissues with the compound of claim 1 so that expression of human stearoyl-CoA desaturase is inhibited.

16. A method of treating a human having a disease or condition associated with human stearoyl-CoA desaturase comprising administering to said human a therapeutically or prophylactically effective amount of the compound of claim 1 so that expression of human stearoyl-CoA desaturase is inhibited.

17. The method of claim 16 wherein the condition involves abnormal lipid metabolism.

18. The method of claim 16 wherein the condition involves abnormal cholesterol metabolism.

19. The method of claim 16 wherein the condition is atherosclerosis.

20. The method of claim 16 wherein the disease is cardiovascular disease.